

# Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/666,086

Examiner

Oanh L. Duong

Applicant(s)

UKIGAWA ET AL.

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## -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 08/19/2004.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 2-7 and 9-30.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 12 January 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) ☒ All   b) ☐ Some\*   c) ☐ None   of the:
    1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.


Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
  6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS ( as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
    - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review ( PTO-948) attached
      - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

### Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),  
Paper No./Mail Date received on 2/2/2004
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit  
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),  
Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_.

  
**HOSAIN ALAM**  
SENIOR PATENT EXAMINER

***Reasons for Allowance***

1. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The invention as claimed. Claims 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 28 and 29 specially include a limitation based on counting the number of terminal devices/participants which/who have logged into a current chat session in a chat network system, and outputting voice information to the terminal devices/ participants in the chat session set at an audible-level/volume in accordance with the counted result. None of the cited prior art teaches the invention as claimed and the invention is patentable.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

***Interview Summary***

2. Examiner was contacted by the undersigned, Alexander V. Yampolsky (Registration No. 36,324), on October 19, 2004. The undersigned authorized examiner to amend claims as set in proposed amendment. In addition, applicants allows examiner to cooperate some limitations (e.g., count means, sending means) of claim 2 into claims 5, 7, 14, 28 and 29 and correct any informality in the claims.

**EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

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3. An extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) is required in order to make an examiner's amendment which places this application in condition for allowance. During a telephone conversation conducted on October 18, 2004, Applicants requested an extension of time for 2 MONTH(S) and authorized the Director to charge Deposit Account No. 500417 the required fee of \$870.00 for this extension and authorized the following examiner's amendment. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The title of the invention is changed to: **"A Network System and Method for Providing Voice Information to Participants in a Chat Session Set at an Audible Level Corresponding to the Number of Participants Currently Logged in the Chat session"**.

The claims are amended as follow:

2. (Currently Amended) A chat network system providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, the chat network system including a server device and terminal devices connected to the sever device via a network, wherein:

said server device comprises:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information

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sent from the terminal devices via the network;

count means for counting in accordance with the predetermined input information that said input information receiving means receives;

information providing means for providing information in accordance with a value counted by said count means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information;

voice information providing means for providing voice information set at an audible level in accordance with the value that the counting means counts; and

sending means for sending information that the information providing means provides, and the voice information that the voice information providing means provides, via said network to the terminal devices currently logged in the chat session; wherein

said terminal devices comprise:

input means for inputting said predetermined input information;

input information sending means for sending said predetermined input information input by said input means via the network [.]<sub>1</sub> and controlling the input information receiving means of said server device to receive the predetermined input information;

means for receiving information sent from the sending means of the server device via the network and voice information; and

output means for outputting information and voice information that the receiving means receives.

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3. (Currently Amended) A chat network system providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, the chat network system including a server device, and terminal devices connected to the sever device via a network, wherein said terminal devices connected to said server device are divided into groups, and

said server device comprises:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from the terminal devices via the network;

counting means for counting for every group in accordance with the predetermined input information that said input information receiving means receives;

information providing means for providing information including voice information set at an audible level in accordance with a counted result for every group as counted by said counting means, wherein the counted result representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information;

sending means for sending information that the information providing means provides, to the terminal devices currently logged in the chat session, via said network; wherein

said terminal devices comprise:

input means for inputting said predetermined input information;

input information sending means for sending the predetermined input information input by said input means via the network, and controlling the input information receiving means of said server device to receive the predetermined input information;

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means for receiving information sent from the sending means of the server device via the network, and voice information; and

output means for outputting information and voice information that the receiving means receives.

4. (Currently Amended) A chat network system including a server device and terminal devices connected to said server device through a network, wherein:

said server device includes a memory for storing a program, a processor for executing the program, and a first communications device for sending and receiving information to and from said terminal devices,

the first communications device receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices through the network,

the processor counting in accordance with the predetermined input information received by the first communications device,

the processor generating information and voice information set an audible level corresponding to a [the] counted value, wherein the counted value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information; and

said server device sending the generated information and the voice information to said terminal devices from the first communications device through the network;

each of said terminal devices

includes a memory for storing a program, a processor for executing the

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program, an input device for inputting information, an output device for outputting information, and a second communications device for sending and receiving information to and from said server devices,

inputs the predetermined input information through the input device,

sends the predetermined input information input from the input device to the [second] first communications device from the second communications device through the network,

the second communications device receiving the information and the voice information from the first communications device of said server device through the network, and

each of said terminal devices outputting the information and the voice information received by the second communications device from the output device.

5. (Currently Amended) An information server system which serves participants of a chat network service with information through a network, comprising:

accepting means for accepting predetermined information sent from the participants of the chat network service through the network;

count means for counting in accordance with the predetermined information which said accepting means has accepted;

information providing means for providing said information including voice information set at an audible level corresponding to a value counted by said count means to the participants of the chat network service through the network [.] wherein the value representing the number of participants who have logged in to a current chat session

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associated with the predetermined input information; and

sending means for sending said information via said network to the participants  
currently logged in the chat session.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for serving information, in a chat network system including a server device and terminal devices connected to each other through a network, from said server device to said terminal devices, said method comprising:

an inputting step of inputting predetermined input information from said terminal devices;

an input information sending step of sending the predetermined input information input in said inputting step from said terminal devices to said server device through the network;

a counting step of counting according to the predetermined input information which is sent in said input information sending step and received by said server device;

an information providing step, as performed by said server device, providing information corresponding to a value counted in said counting step, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information;

a voice information providing step of the server device providing voice information set at an audible level in accordance with the value counted in the counting step;

a sending step of sending the information provided in said information providing step and the voice information provided in said voice information providing step, to said terminal devices currently logged in the chat session from said server device through the



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network; and

an outputting step of outputting from said terminal devices the information and voice information sent in said sending step and received by said terminal device.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for providing information to participants of a chat network service through a network, said method including counting in accordance with predetermined input information sent from the participants of the chat network service;

providing the participants of the chat network service through the network with said information including voice information set at an audible level corresponding to a value counted in accordance with the predetermined input information sent from the participants of the network service through the network[.], wherein the value representing the number of participants which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined information; and

sending said information via said network to the participants currently logged in the chat session.

9. (Currently Amended) A server device which is connected to terminal devices through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, comprising:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from the terminal devices through said network;

counting means for counting in accordance with the predetermined input

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information received by the input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information in accordance with a value counted by the counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input information;

voice providing means for providing voice information at an audible level according to the value counted by said counting means; and

sending means for sending information provided by the information providing means and the voice information provided by the voice information providing means to the terminal device currently logged in the chat session through the network.

11. (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 9, wherein:

said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting for every group[.] a number of items of the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives. (2) means for counting a number of log-in people to [the] a chat network [net work] system at that time[.] for every group, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, or (3) means for counting up for every group, when said predetermined input information is an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every group, when said input information indicates log-out.

12. (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 9, wherein:

the predetermined input information is information and voice information, which is

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input from said terminal devices, as regards contents of the information provided by said information providing means; and

said counting means counts in accordance with the predetermined input information which is received by said input information receiving means at a predetermined interval.

13. (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 12, wherein:

the predetermined input information includes various types of the contents of the information and voice information provided by said information providing means; and

said counting means is means for counting for every type of the contents of the predetermined input information.

14. (Currently Amended) A server device connected to terminal device through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, wherein:

said terminal devices connected to said server device through the network are divided into groups;

and wherein the server device comprises:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from the terminal devices through the network;

counting means for counting for every group of terminal devices, in accordance with the predetermined input information received by input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing said terminal devices with information, including voice information set at an audible level, which differ from each group of said

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terminal devices, in accordance with a counted result for every group as counted by said counting means[.], wherein the counted result representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information; and

sending means for sending said information via said network to the participants currently logged in the chat session.

15. (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 14, further comprising user information registration means for registering information regarding users of said terminal devices which are connected to said server device through the network, and

wherein said terminal devices connected to said server device through the network are divided into groups in accordance with the information registered by said user information registration means, and

said counting means refers to the user information registration means based on the predetermined input information received by said input information receiving means, and counts for each group of said terminal devices.

16. (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 14, wherein said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting for every group, a number of items of the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, (2) means for counting a number of log-in people to [the net work] a chat network system at that time for every group[.] in accordance with the predetermined

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input information that the input information receiving means receives, or (3) means for counting up for every group, when said predetermined input information is an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every group, when said input information indicates log-out.

17. (Currently Amended) A server device which can communicate with terminal devices through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, including a memory for storing a program, a processor for executing the program, and a communications device for sending and receiving information to and from said terminal devices, wherein:

said communications device receiving predetermined input information sent from the terminal devices through the network;

said processor counting in accordance with the predetermined input information received by the communications device;

said processor generating information including voice information set at an audible level corresponding to [the counted] a value counted by said processor; and sending the generated information from the communications [terminal] device to the terminal devices through the network, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information.

18. (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 17, wherein:

the predetermined input information is an input information which is input, in said

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terminal devices, as regards contents of the information generated by the processor and sent from the communications device; and

the processor counts in accordance with the input information received by the communications device at a predetermined interval.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium which records a program making a computer device, which is connected to terminal devices through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, function as:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices through the network;

counting means for counting in accordance with the predetermined input information received by said input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information in accordance with a value counted by said counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information;

voice information providing means for providing voice information set an audible level in accordance with a value counted by said counting means; and

sending means for sending the information provided by said information providing means and the voice information providing means to said terminal devices currently logged in the chat session through the network.

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20. (Currently Amended) A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and sent through a communications path, said signal making a computer device which is connected to a plurality of terminal devices through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices to function as a computer device connected to terminal devices through a network as:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices through said network;

counting means for counting in accordance with the predetermined input information received by said input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information in accordance with a value counted by said counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input information; and

voice information providing means for providing voice information set at an audible level in accordance with a value counted by said counting means; and

sending means for sending the information provided by said information providing means and the voice information providing means to the terminal devices currently logged in the chat session through the network.

21. (Currently Amended) A server device which can communicate with terminal devices through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices, the server device including a memory for storing a program, a processor for executing the program, and a communications device

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for sending and receiving information to and from said terminal devices,

the communications device receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices that are divided into groups beforehand, through the network,

the processor counting for every group, in accordance with the predetermined input information received by the communications device,

the processor generating for every group, information including voice information set at an audible level, corresponding to [the counted] a value counted by said processor, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input information, and

said server device sending the generated information to said terminal devices from the communications device through the network.

22. (Currently Amended) The server device as recited in claim 21, wherein said processor includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the predetermined input information that the [first] communications device receives, (2) means for counting for every group, a number of log-in people to [the net work] a chat network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the [first] communications device receives, or (3) means for counting up for every group, when said predetermined input information received by the [fist] communications device is an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every group, when said input information indicates log-out.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium which



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records a program wherein the program makes a computer device which is communicatable with terminal devices the network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices to function as:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices, which are divided into groups beforehand, through the network;

counting means for counting for every group, in accordance with the predetermined input information received by said input information receiving means;

information providing means for providing information including voice information set at an audible level in accordance with a value counted by said counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input information; and

sending means for sending the information provided by said information providing means to said terminal devices currently logged in the chat session through the network.

24. (Currently Amended) A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and sent through a communications path, said signal making a computer which is connected to a plurality of terminal devices through a network for providing chat services to a plurality of participants at their respective terminal devices to function as:

input information receiving means for receiving predetermined input information sent from said terminal devices which are divided into groups beforehand, through the network;

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counting means for counting for every group, in accordance with the predetermined input information received by said input information receiving means; information providing means for providing information including voice information set at an audible level in accordance with a value counted by said counting means, wherein the value representing the number of terminal devices which have logged in to a current chat session associated with the input information; and sending means for sending the information provided by said information providing means to said terminal devices currently logged in the chat session through the network. .

25. (Currently Amended) The network system as recited in claim 3, wherein said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives for every group, (2) means for counting for every group, number of log-in people to the [network] chat network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, or (3) means for counting up for every group, when said predetermined input information received by the input information receiving means is an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every group, when said input information indicates log-out.

26. (Currently Amended) The network system as recited in claim 4, wherein the processor includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the

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predetermined input information that the first communications device receives, (2) means for counting for every group, a number of log-in people to [the net work] a chat network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the first communications device receives, or (3) means for counting up for every group, when said predetermined input information received by the [fist] first communications device is an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down for every group, when said input information indicates log-out.

27. (Current Amended) The information providing system as recited in claim 5, wherein said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, (2) means for counting a number of log-in people to [the net work] a chat network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, or (3) means for counting up when said predetermined input information received by the input information receiving means is an input information indicating log-in to the server device, and counting down when said input information indicates log-out.

28. (Currently Amended) An information server system which serves participants of a chat network service with information through a network, comprising:  
accepting means for accepting predetermined information sent from the participants in a plurality of groups, of the chat network service through the network;  
counting means for counting for every group, in accordance with the

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predetermined information said accepting means has accepted; and

information providing means for providing information including voice information set at an audible level for every group, corresponding to a value counted by said counting means for every group, to the participants of the chat network service through the network[.], wherein the value representing the number of participants who have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined information; and

sending means for sending said information via said network to the participants currently logged in the chat session for each group.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for providing information to participants of a chat network service through a network, said method including

counting in accordance with predetermined input information sent from the participants of the chat network service through the network;

providing the participants of the chat network service, who are divided into groups, through the network with information including voice information set at an audible level corresponding to a value counted for every group, in accordance with predetermined input information sent from the participants of the chat network service through the network, wherein the value representing the number of participants who have logged in to a current chat session associated with the predetermined input information, and

sending the provided information to the participants currently logged in the chat session.

30. (Currently Amended) The network system as recited in claim 2, wherein said counting means includes any of (1) means for counting a number of items of the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives, (2) means for counting a number of log-in people to the [net work] chat network system at that time, in accordance with the predetermined input information that the input information receiving means receives[.], or (3) means for counting up when said predetermined input information is an input information indicating log-in to the server device. and counting down when said input information indicates log-out.

#### *Conclusion*

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Oanh L. Duong whose telephone number is (703) 305-0295. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Friday, 8:00AM - 5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hosain T. Alam can be reached on (703) 308-6662. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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O.D

October 22, 2004

  
**HOSAIN ALAM**  
**SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER**